

Malcolm's Monday Musings: 25 May 2020

(i) Scripture.

Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands ... but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us ... now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself ... to those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.

Hebrews 9. 24-28 (New King James Version)

(ii) Food for thought.

1. The Lord's presence.

Past, present and future (following the order of the books of the Bible):

- (i) 'The Lord your God *has been with you*. You have lacked nothing' (Deut. 2. 7).
- (ii) 'The Lord your God *is with you* wherever you go' (Josh. 1. 9).
- (iii) 'The Lord God ... *will be with you*; He will not fail you, nor forsake you' (1 Chron. 28. 20.)

The secret of contentment.

'Let your way of life be without love of money, and be content with what you have, for He has said, "I will never leave you, nor forsake you"' (Heb. 13. 5).

An Anglican minister 'took a morning's walk some considerable distance from his parish, and observing a habitation more wretched than any he had seen before, walked towards it. To his surprise he heard a voice of great joyous praise. Drawing nearer, he heard it was that of an individual only.

He wanted to learn the cause, and, looking in at the window, he viewed the poor inhabitant in the most wretched state of outward want and poverty that he had ever seen.

She had on a little stool before her a piece of black bread and a cup of cold water; and with her eyes and hands lifted up to heaven, as in a rapture of praise, repeated these words: "*What! all this, and Jesus Christ too? What! all this, and Jesus Christ too?*"

It hardly needs to be added, that with the living lesson which he had learnt, he with holy gratitude returned ... '.

(*'The Life and Times of Selina Countess of Huntingdon'*, volume 1 by C. H. Seymour: page 40.)

In every direction.

The Lord's people in the Old Testament experienced His presence in a wonderful variety of ways.

We read that He both went before them and behind them: 'the Lord will go (i) before you, and the God of Israel will be (ii) your rear guard' (Isa. 52. 12).

But not only so; we read also that He was both around them and among them: 'As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is (iii) round about His people' (Psa. 125. 2), and, 'Let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell (iv) among them' (Exod. 25. 8).

Yet not only was He before them and behind them, around them and among them, but He was also with them for company, over them for protection, and under them for support: 'the Lord your God is (v) with you wherever you go' (Josh. 1. 9), 'He shall cover you with His feathers, and (vi) under His wings you shall take refuge' (Psa. 91. 4), and, 'O house of Jacob ... who have been (vii) upheld by me from birth ... even to grey hairs I will carry you! I have made, and I will bear' (Isa. 46. 4).

What a breath-taking thought, that in times of trouble and distress God's presence was (i) before, (ii) behind, (iii) around, (iv) among, (v) with, (vi) over, and (vii) under His people!

In all circumstances.

God graciously accommodated Himself to the circumstances faced by His people.

Consider the days of Israel's wandering in the wilderness. In one of his psalms, David addressed his song of praise to God because, as he said, 'you went out before your people ... you marched through the wilderness' (Psa. 68. 7; cf. Judges 5. 4). 'I have not dwelt in an house', God had earlier said to David, 'since the day that I brought up the children of Israel out of Egypt, even to this day, but have walked in a tent and in a tabernacle' (2 Sam. 7. 6; cf. Lev. 26. 12; Deut. 23. 14).

Just think: the One of whom it is said, 'He walks in the circuit of heaven' (Job 22. 14), and 'He walks upon the wings of the wind' (Psa. 104. 3), deigned to 'walk in a tent' that He might be with His people!

2. 'Versus'.

Miraculous conception versus miraculous birth.

What was unique was not how our Lord left Mary's womb, but how He entered it. His conception was miraculous and utterly unique (Luke 1. 15-17); He was born in the normal way (Luke 2. 7).

Feet washed versus feet anointed.

'In John 13 the feet of the disciples (pointing to their walk) are defiled, and need to be washed with water (a type of God's word); but in the previous chapter (for in all things (Christ must have the pre-eminence) we see the feet of our blessed Lord, not washed with water (for there was no defilement in Him), but anointed with precious ointment, the fragrance of which filled the house, telling that the walk of Him (as well as His blessed person) was a sweet smelling savour to the Father'.
(A. W. Pink, '*Gleanings in Genesis*', page 348.)

Foes versus brethren.

Psalm 22 speaks of the Lord Jesus surrounded by two classes of people; (i) His foes (Psa. 22. 12), and (ii) His brethren (Psa. 22. 12).

'Who' they are versus 'whose' they are.

'Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Feed *my* lambs ... shepherd *my* sheep ... feed *my* sheep' (John 21. 15-17).

We are to love and serve other saints, not because of 'who' they are, but because of 'whose' they are. The Good, the Great, and the Chief Shepherd says, 'They are *my* lambs, *my* sheep'!

Minds set on earthly things versus minds set on heavenly things.

'... who minds earthly things ... our citizenship is in heaven' (Phil. 3. 19-20).

Towards end of the 16th century, 'King Henry the Fourth asked the Duke of Alva if he had observed the great eclipse of the sun, which had lately happened. "No", said the Duke, "*I have so much to do on earth, that I have no leisure to look up to heaven*" ... It is very sad to think, how hearts and time are so much taken up with earthly things, that they have scarcely any leisure to look up to heaven'.

(Thomas Brooks, '*Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices*', page 65.)

Eyes versus ears.

'When the woman saw' (Gen. 3. 6) ... 'Regarding the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, Eve 'assessed the significance of the tree through her eyes rather than through her ears! Instead of listening to what God said about it, she thought about it only in terms of what she could see on it'.

(A. Begg and S. B. Ferguson, '*Name above All Names*', page 17.)

Coat versus character.

Potiphar's wife 'caught him (Joseph) by his garment, saying, "Lie with me". But he left his garment in her hand and fled and got out of the house' (Gen. 39. 12).

This was not the time for Joseph to try to argue himself out of the situation (contrast Gen. 39. 8-9). There are times when one's feet are more useful than one's tongue, and this was certainly one of them. For, although Joseph left his coat behind him, he took with him something of infinitely greater value ... he retained his character.

It has been well said, 'It is better to lose a good coat than a good conscience'.

(Matthew Henry, '*Commentary on the Whole Bible*', on Gen. 39. 12).

3. Miscellaneous.

God's love.

'When we see man for what he is, the wrath of God for what it is, and the cross for what it is, then and only then do we see love for what it is'.

(Leon Morris, '*Testaments of Love: A Study of Love in the Bible*', page 131.)

God's mercy and God's wrath.

'The Lord is ... longsuffering ... not wishing that any should perish' (2 Pet. 3. 9).

'When Mercy cometh into the world, she drives winged steeds; the axles of her chariot-wheels are glowing hot with speed; but when Wrath cometh, it walks with tardy footsteps; it is not in haste to slay, it is not swift to condemn'.

(C. H. Spurgeon, '*Mercy, Omnipotence, and Justice*', a sermon preached at New Park Street Pulpit on 21 June 1857.)

Saul of Tarsus and the persecution of the church.

'Saul approved of (Stephen's) death. And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles ... Saul ravaged the church, entering house after house, he dragged off men and women and committed them to prison. Therefore those who were scattered went about preaching the word, and Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ to them' (Acts 8. 1-5)

'It almost seems as if Paul led more people to Christ as a Pharisee than as an apostle! The Lord was able to use persecution to get the eyewitnesses of the resurrection out the door'.

(D. B. Wallace, '*The Great Commission, Historical Setting*').

Peter's blunder.

'Peter answered and said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles: one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah"-- for *he did not know what to say*', Mark 9. 5-6.

It has been well said, 'When the screen of your mind goes blank, *don't forget to turn off the sound*'.



You will find this sage advice quoted (in context) in the attached document.

Detailed notes. [See the attached Word document, 'The Mount of Transfiguration'.](#)

(iii) Go on, smile.

The joys of being young!

A shy little four-year-old girl was taken to the dentist for her first teeth cleaning and check-up. The dental assistant tried to strike up a conversation with her, but without success. After the cleaning was finished, the dentist himself attempted to get the little one to say something.

'How old are you?' he enquired. But again, no response.

The dentist persevered: 'Don't you know how old you are?'

Immediately, four tiny fingers went up.

'Ah', said the dentist, 'and do you know how old that is?' The same four little fingers went up again.

Continuing his effort to get the little one to say something, the dentist asked, 'Can't you talk?'

The little patient looked at him in disbelief, and replied, '*Can't you count?*'

Little Johnny walked up to his aunt on one of her rare visits and said, 'Wow, Aunt Edna, why are you so ugly?'

His mortified mother pulled Johnny into the kitchen. 'How', she scolded severely, 'could you dare tell your aunt that she is ugly!' 'Because she is', said little Johnny.

'You go back in there now', his mother demanded, 'and you apologize to her. I mean it, you go right now, and tell her you're sorry!'

Little Johnny goes back into the living room, walks over to his aunt, and says, 'Aunt Edna, *I am really sorry that you're so ugly*'.

'A little boy went to the grocery store and asked the clerk for a box of detergent. The clerk asked the boy why he needed detergent.

"I want to wash my dog", replied the lad.

"Well, son, this detergent is pretty strong for washing a little dog".

The little boy replied, "That's what I want. He's mighty dirty".

He took the box of detergent home, and about a week later he returned. The store clerk, recognizing him, asked him about his dog. "Oh, he's dead", said the boy.

"Oh, I'm sorry", replied the clerk. "I guess the detergent was too strong".

"I don't think the detergent hurt him", said the boy. "*I think it was the rinse cycle that got him*".'

(Robert J. Morgan, '*Nelson's Complete Book of Stories, Illustrations, and Quotes*'.)

'Walking through the hallways at the middle school where I work, I saw a new substitute teacher standing outside his classroom with his forehead against a locker.

I heard him mutter, "However did you get yourself into this?"

Knowing that he was assigned to a difficult class, I tried to offer moral support.

"Are you okay?" I asked. "Can I help?"

He lifted his head and replied, "*I'll be fine as soon as I get this kid out of his locker*".'

See the two attached 'This sure is fun' pictures.

